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Joseph C. Mitchell
Department of Biology and School of Continuing Studies
University of Richmond
Richmond, Virginia 23173

Donald J. Schwab
Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
5806 Mooretown Road
Williamsburg, Virginia 23188

and

Gary M. Williamson
False Cape State Park
4001 Sandpiper Road
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23456

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THE LEAF BEETLE *PSEUDOLAMPISIS GUTTATA* (LECONTE) IN VIRGINIA (CHRYSOMELIDAE: ALTICINAE). - A blacklight trap placed by Steven M. Roble and the author beside a private access road continuing Co. Rt. 666, 2 km east of Claresville, Greensville Co., Virginia, collected a large number of insects during its overnight operation on 7-8 August 1996. Upon being sorted for preparation at the Virginia Museum of Natural History, the accumulation was noted to include dozens of specimens of a small and very colorful alticine chrysomelid not represented in the museum's collection. On the basis of enlarged metafemora, apically spherical 5th tarsomere of the rear legs, and densely hispid elytra, the species was identified to the genus *Distigmoptera* with the recent manual of northeastern beetles by Downie & Arnett (1996). However, the specimens did not conform to the generic diagnosis in lacking both mid-elytral depressions and long coarse dorsal setae, nor did it "key out" to any of the six species treated. Several individuals sent to the Department of Entomology, National Museum of Natural History were identified by Steven Lingefelter, Research Entomologist with the USDA Systematic Entomology Laboratory, to be *Pseudolampsis guttata* (LeConte), a beetle with a distinctly Lower Austral distribution.

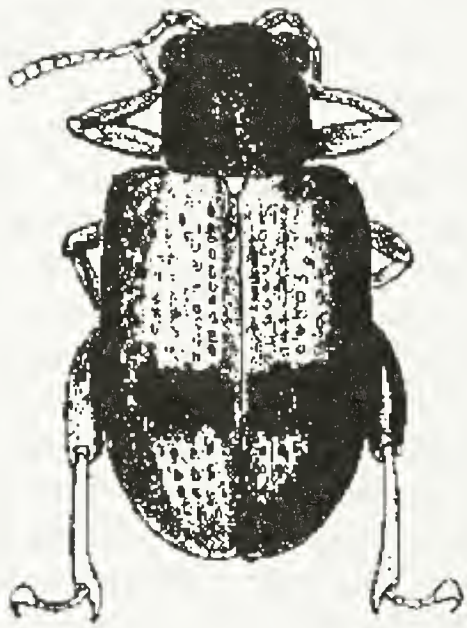
The collection site is beside an extensive permanent marsh in the Meherrin River floodplain. Subsequent sorting of backlogged samples at VMNH produced three additional specimens of *guttata*, taken by random sweeping of low vegetation near the Meherrin River on 19 August 1994 (VMNH survey party). This site is about 1 km east of the blacklight station, with which it seemed to have few vegetational facies in common.

Originally described from Louisiana, *P. guttata* was not listed for North Carolina in either of the insect lists compiled by Brimley (1938) or Wray (1967), and no specimens are represented in the insect collection at North Carolina State University. It is recorded by Kirk (1969) for Florence and Sumter counties, South Carolina, with the notation "Extremely rare, but common locally." These are apparently the northernmost published localities for the species. The known range was reviewed by Balsbaugh (1969), who established that the beetle extends from South Carolina to Argentina.

Dr. Lingefelter kindly provided a list of the *guttata* material in the USNM collection. Most (16 specimens) are from Alachua and Highlands counties, Florida, but several are from

Morgan, Louisiana (7), and Marion, Somerset County, Maryland (1). This last locality, near the midlength of the Delmarva Peninsula, extends the known range of the species some 210 km northeast of the Greenville County site and 530 km (320 miles) from Florence, S. C.

Kirk specified black lighting as the source of his South Carolina material, and several USNM series from Maryland, Florida, and Louisiana carry a similar notation, suggesting this to be an optimal way to obtain the species. However, since both VMNH and DCR-DNH personnel have employed blacklight techniques at many sites in southeastern Virginia during the past six years without encountering this beetle elsewhere, some environmental factor is an obviously important determinant affecting its local distribution. A series of 10 beetles from Alachua County, Florida (USNM), are noted to have been reared on *Azolla caroliniana*, which suggests that light traps placed near *Azolla* "stands" have a good chance to obtain this "Extremely rare, but common locally" species elsewhere in eastern Virginia.



Pseudolampsis guttata is an elegant little beetle, with a maximum length of about 3.0 mm. The thorax is notably narrow (about as wide as a single elytron), and the entire body

surface is invested in very fine dense pubescence. With low magnification the body appears nearly black, except that the pubescence reflects light as either white or gold, depending on the angle of illumination. In most specimens the midelytral regions tend to be somewhat reddish or maroon. Legs and antennae are light brown to yellowish. Species of *Distigmoptera* are similar in size and proportions, but are much "shaggier" with long coarse hairs dorsally, and each elytron is marked with a circular pit near the midlength.

I am indebted to Dr. Roble for his ongoing and fruitful collaboration with VMNH inventory work, to Robert L. Blinn for access to the NCSU collection, and to Dr. Lingafelter for making the identification and providing collection data from specimens in the USNM collection.

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Richard L. Hoffman
Virginia Museum of Natural History
Martinsville, Virginia 24112